

Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme)

Background

Clare Wood was murdered by her ex-boyfriend, George Appleton, in 2009. Unbeknown to her, he had a history of violence towards women. Following her death, Clare's family said that if she had known about this record of violence, it is likely she'd still be alive today. They campaigned for a new scheme to enable people to find out about the risks posed by their partner.

Clare's Law, or the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, was introduced in March 2014. It gives anyone the right to ask the police if their partner has been abusive in the past. The request for information is entirely confidential, and could potentially save a life.

How the scheme works

The aim of the scheme is to:

- give you formal ways to make enquiries about your partner if you are worried that they may have been abusive in the past
- help you to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship
- provide further help and support to assist you when making that choice.

If police checks show that your partner has a record of violent behaviour, or if there is other information to indicate that you may be at risk from your partner, the police will consider sharing this information with you.

Who can make the application?

- You can make an application about your partner if you are concerned that they may harm you.

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- Any concerned third party, such as your parents, neighbours or friends can also make an application if they are concerned about you. However, if someone else applies they would not receive any information about your partner. Information will only be given to the person in the relationship. OR - information will be given to someone who is in a position to protect you from the abuse.

How do I make an application?

Contact Norfolk Police by visiting a police station or phoning 101, the non-emergency number for the police.

In an emergency, ALWAYS dial 999

What happens next?

If the authorities feel abuse is likely, they will put together a safety plan about how to make any necessary disclosures. The police think carefully about who that disclosure should be made to. A person who receives information about domestic violence isn't allowed to share it with anyone without permission from the police. And the police can't give information to anyone unless it's absolutely necessary.

It's important to note, not getting a disclosure doesn't mean there is no violent past. It just means the police either don't have any information, or they don't feel the risk is high enough at that time.

For more information visit:

www.norfolk.police.uk/advice/assault-abuse-threats/domestic-abuse

www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/domestic-abuse

www.leewaysupport.org

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Please contact us if you would like this guide in another language.

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